

CLASS CLIPS

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

TEACHERS NOTES

Fiona Shore

©BBC 2007

CLASS CLIPS – RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

INTRODUCTION

These clips are intended to be used to stimulate discussion and further work on three topics which are at the heart of Religious Education.

The sections vary in length and the duration of each is shown to help with planning. They are a flexible resource enabling the students to consider a variety of views on the issues and it is not expected that they be watched as complete programmes.

A normal classroom layout is not usually conducive to discussion lessons.

If possible, try to rearrange the desks so that the class can be seated in a circle; this will help to promote a more relaxed atmosphere which will encourage participation. If you have the facilities, you may decide to use different clips with different groups within the class, only bringing all the students together at the end. This would equip the class with all the information for a lively debate on each of the topics.

The suggested activities for each topic cover knowledge, understanding, explanation and evaluation, but each individual is encouraged to think more deeply about the issues raised and to form their own conclusion.

CREATION**Clip 1 - 'Back to the beginning' Start: 0.42 Duration: 0.31**

An animated sequence working backwards to the beginning of everything.

Linked activities

- Think about the world around you. Do you take it for granted or do you find it amazing? If you find it amazing try to describe how.
- Discuss places that the class has visited that elicit awe and wonder; the view from the top of a mountain, the Grand Canyon etc. Do these awe-inspiring sights suggest that there is a creator?
- Watch a short video interpretation of the Genesis story on www.kids4truth.com/creation
- Put together your own power point presentation 'In the beginning...'
- Look at creation stories from a variety of different traditions (not just Judeo-Christian, perhaps Aboriginal or African?) Identify common strands.
- Devise your own creation story using some of these ideas. Present it as a storyboard.
- Make your own rap / video about creation.



*Here's Abe there's Zeb two just ordinary guys,
Just chilling until they met the guys from 29,
Now it's time for a journey of courage and persistence,
An adventure to discover how this world came into existence,
Here we go with Abe and Zeb on this quest for truth,
Examining the evidence, theories, facts and proofs,
So come join the 29th Chapter as we ride,
We'll present you with the theories but you'll have to decide,
Unlike Evolution theory which presents a big bang,
Some believe the world's created by the work of God's hand,
An all-powerful creator who set the stars in place,
And made the earth and all we see in just 6 days,
Day one he made a planet of immeasurable size,
Then he created an atmosphere in which life could thrive,
On day two he separates the seas from the land,
Over there look there's a safe place where we could stand,
The third day God created all the plants and the trees,
He made them all to reproduce bearing fruits and seeds,
The next day he continued in his immense design,
He made the galaxies and stars to mark the dates and times,
Next came the sun and moon to help the whole thing grow,
Via photosynthesis no time to explain that though,
Now Zeb hold your breath were gonna venture deep,
It's day 5 and God's creating all the beasts of the sea,
Hey yo Abe keep your eyes to the sky,
'cause on the same day he made the birds and bees and such that fly,
Come on keep up there's no time for hesitation,
It's day 6 and it's the final chapter of creation,
God created all the beast that roam the land,
From the greatest to the smallest each the work of his hand,
And now the crowning chapter of his plan,
In his own image God created both woman and man,
And now I don't mean to get you upset,
But if we don't move your gonna get stepped on by that big T-Rex,
Boy trust man he looks vexed,
We best get before we get murd by that T-rex*

CREATION**Paul Taylor**

Paul Taylor is Head of Media Relations for Answers in Genesis, a Christian organisation.

Paul talks about accepting the Bible as truth and explains the creationist view.

He answers the following questions:

How old is the universe?

Do the fossil records disprove the words of the Bible?

Is there a clash between scientific ideas and creationists?

Science works on evidence – isn't religion a case of faith without evidence?

Linked activities

- Discuss the questions put to Paul Taylor. Are these ideas the students have considered before? How convinced are they by the answers he gives?
- Draw a spectrum of beliefs ranging from the Creationist view to the 'Big Bang' theory.

CREATION**Clip 5 - Richard Dawkins Start: 7.34 Duration: 6.36**

Richard Dawkins is Professor of The Public Understanding of Science at Oxford University. He talks about the origin of the universe being approximately 14 billion years ago—before the ordinary laws of physics came into being. He goes on to address the question of what happened before the Big Bang. He concludes that Darwinian natural selection is the only theory of evolution that can account for the illusion of design. He answers the following questions:

Isn't Darwinian evolution just about chance?

If we have evolved from monkeys, why are there still monkeys?

What is the purpose of our existence?

Is a scientist's evidence based on their faith that a theory is true?

Linked activities

- Find out about arguments for the existence of God based on design - the theological arguments (e.g. Paley's watch).
- Visit Richard Dawkins' website (www.richarddawkins.net) This gives access to a variety of articles and interviews.
- Before watching the clip, divide the class into groups and give each group one of the questions that Richard Dawkins answers. Then ask the groups to feedback their conclusions.



*Here we go with Abe and Zeb on this quest for truth
Examining the theories, evidence, facts and proof
So come join the 29th Chapter as we ride
We'll present you with the theories but you have to decide*

*So Abe and Zeb discover the idea that includes
A mix between a religious and scientific view
It looks at the religious texts as more of a tale,
An ancient poem bringing meaning where science has failed
In this, God exists and has a clever design
He forms the universe from his intelligent mind
Beginning with basic forms of life of each kind
He gives them the capacity to evolve over time
So Abe goes swimming watches God form an amoeba
Then over millions of years, shapes it into a sea creature
Meanwhile Zeb's on the land watching a pre ape
Suddenly God teaks its hunch to make it's back straight
But wait let's go back in time to start again
'Cause some use the big bang theory to explain
In this view, God puts laws into the seams of nature
Evolution occurs but God is still seen as the creator
This view is known as theistic evolution
Now guys it's time for you to make your own conclusion*

CREATION

Alister McGrath



Alister McGrath is Professor of Historical Philosophy at Oxford University but previously worked as a research scientist. He has written a book in response to Richard Dawkins' 'The God Delusion' called 'Dawkins' God'. In this clip, he puts forward a view held by scientists who believe in evolution but also believe in God. This is sometimes called 'Theistic Evolution.'

He answers the following questions:

Do you believe God made the world in 6 days?

How do we make sense of a complex world?

Is there a purpose to evolution?

Can science and faith work together?

Is the natural world clear enough for us to say there definitely is or definitely isn't a God?

Do the limits of science provide evidence for God?

Are there different kinds of truth?

McGrath states that many scientists believe in God because that is where the evidence leads.

Linked activities

Discuss the idea that 'God was the creator of evolution'

- How do you think the idea that the planet is God's creation affects a person's attitude to the environment?
- Introduce the idea of 'stewardship'. However the world came about, what are our responsibilities? How should we take care of it? Begin with the idea of looking after personal possessions, and our immediate environment. Move on to energy conservation etc. Find out what the local area was like 50/100 years ago.
- If you were to be put in charge of the environment what would be the first three things you would do?
- Find out about the Assisi Declaration. Leaders of the six major world faiths met in Assisi in 1986 to discuss their '... responsibility for the welfare of Planet Earth.'

- What was the significance of holding the conference in Assisi?
- Make a display of religious teachings about looking after the planet.
- Compose your own rap/poem about creation.
- Explain how ahimsa and other Hindu beliefs emphasise the sanctity of God's creation.
- Visit the website www.christianevidencesociety.org.uk where you will find articles about science and religion.

CREATION

The Challenge



*Abe and Zeb were two ordinary guys
 Hooked up with 29, went on a ride that blew their minds
 Now it's up to them to raise their different queries
 What's not, what's true, what's a conspiracy theory
 But really their journey is over and yours can begin
 Equipped with these theories hold your breath and strap in
 But really their journey is over and yours can begin
 Equipped with these theories hold your breath
 and strap innnnnn...*

ASSISTED DYING**Clip 1 - Vox Pop****Start: 21.12 Duration: 1.18**

An introductory section in which different views on euthanasia are gathered.

It is important to remember that while suicide is no longer a crime in this country, euthanasia is still illegal.

Have the important vocabulary clearly displayed for reference.

The question is posed... 'Should we be able to choose how and when our lives end?'

Linked Activity

- Before watching the clip, ask your class the same question.

ASSISTED DYING**Clip 2 - Definitions****Start: 22.35****Duration: 0.47**

- In order to understand what is being discussed, the students need to be familiar with the vocabulary:

- **Euthanasia** - 'a good death'
- **Passive euthanasia** – withdrawing medication which is keeping a person who is already very near death, alive.
- **Involuntary euthanasia** – where the decision not to treat a terminally ill person is taken by someone other than the patient.
- **Active euthanasia** – the deliberate action to end a life (usually at the patient's request.)
- **Voluntary euthanasia** – where a terminally ill patient actively requests assistance to die.
- **Assisted suicide or Assisted Dying**– where a patient is given the means to end their life.



The term is explained and the question is asked: 'Does it remove the need to assist someone to die?'
The Hospice Movement was founded to relieve pain and offer support to people with terminal illnesses.

Linked activities

- Find out about the Hospice Movement which was set up as 'a response' to the calls to legalise euthanasia by people who wanted to preserve the sanctity of life. Why do religious groups support the movement?
- What is meant by 'quality of life'?
- What is meant by 'The sanctity of life'? How does this affect the discussion about assisted suicide?



At the moment, euthanasia is illegal in the UK. Following recent high profile cases, there have been calls for the law to be changed.

Linked Activity

- People who would not dream of breaking the law are in favour of euthanasia. How do they justify this?

ASSISTED DYING**Clip 5 - The Relatives****Start: 24.12 Duration: 2.20**

Case study –
Sophie Pandit
(Anne Turners Story)

Sophie, her brother and sister recently accompanied their mother to Switzerland where she was helped to die.

ASSISTED DYING**Clip 6 - The Relatives****Start: 26.33 Duration: 2.26**

Case study –
Maureen Frampton
(Colin Frampton's story)

Maureen and her husband Colin chose a different path. Colin received palliative care.

Each interviewee speaks movingly about their choice, and the arguments concerning human rights and the sanctity of life are rehearsed. The difference between administering a lethal dose and withdrawing the means to keep a person alive are discussed.

Linked Activities

- If life is a test, as some religions believe, is it cheating to end your life before it ends naturally?
- Explain what Maureen Frampton means by 'In God's own time'.
- Draw a set of scales and, on each side, write the arguments for and against assisted dying.



Two different views are given here.1) Clare Foster (Policy Advisor to the Church of England) explains the view of the Church of England which is against legalising euthanasia. She puts forward the case that because of the Christian teaching about the sanctity of life, palliative care is the only route and is the 'most loving' choice.

2) Rev. Paul Badham (Professor of Theology and Religious Studies at The University of Wales, Lampeter) also uses the teaching of Jesus, but comes to a different conclusion. He says that Jesus' teaching on moral decisions was that you should treat others as you would wish to be treated yourself.

Linked Activities

- Is the euthanasia debate fuelled by a lack of respect for the elderly? In some communities, age is equated with wisdom, and families feel an obligation to care for their relatives through failing health.
- Create several different scenarios in which a person wishes to die. Give each group one of these to consider. The group could feed back to the class and the case be opened up to general discussion. The students should try to decide what would be the most loving response. (Be sure to include examples of young people with debilitating illnesses as well as elderly people who are approaching the end of their lives).
- Would legalising euthanasia put pressure on people when they were at their most vulnerable?



The effects of legalising assisted dying are debated by doctors who have opposing views..

The key questions are: Would it lead to a breakdown of trust between a patient and doctor?

Would it affect investment in palliative care?

Is it the compassionate choice?

Whose decision should it be?

Linked activities

- What is the 'Hippocratic Oath'? What bearing does this have on the euthanasia debate?
- Should we always 'act in favour of life?'
- What is meant by 'dignity in dying?'
- Debate the motion 'A person has the right to decide to end their life'
- Useful websites: www.religioustolerance.org/euthanasia – religious perspectives on assisted suicide.
- www.christianevidencesociety.org.uk – an article by Mark Russell – Chief Executive of the Church Army
- www.stalbans.anglican.org/bin/gensynodjuly2005.htm – The speech given by the Rt. Rev. Christopher Herbert to the General Synod of the Church of England.
- www.cofe.anglican.org/about/gensynod/agendas/gs1575.rtf A briefing paper to the House of Lords Select Committee on the proposed bill 'Assisted Dying for the Terminally Ill'

FORGIVENESS**Clip 1 - Forgiveness montage Start: 38.35 Duration: .46**

A montage of shots leading to the question, 'Could you forgive?' and continuing with brief extracts from interviews with Julie Nicholson, Jill Seward, Gee and Dominique Walker. (All these people are interviewed at length in later clips). Bible teachings are quoted.

Linked activities

- Ask pupils to describe occasions when they have been called upon to show forgiveness. Gather examples. Have they ever been forgiven for something they did wrong? Discuss the feelings associated with forgiveness. How difficult was it? How do you feel when you look back now? How might things have turned out differently if you had not forgiven or been shown forgiveness?
- Research and display the different teachings on forgiveness. Use a different colour for each religion. e.g.:

'...if a person forgives and makes reconciliation, his reward is due from Allah' (Surah 42:40)

'Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us'
(The Lord's Prayer)

(Visit www.wisdomquotes.com/cat_forgiveness)

FORGIVENESS**Clip 2 - Jill Seward Start: 39.25 Duration: 2.30**

Jill Seward (the daughter of a vicar) talks about her ordeal. When Jill was 21 years old, burglars broke into her house and she was subjected to a vicious rape. Her father and boyfriend were badly beaten up by the intruders. When describing another, unrelated event in her life Jill describes her attitude to forgiveness...

'Anger, hatred, bitterness was destroying me...'

'Forgiveness gave me freedom to move on.'

Linked activities

- How realistic is it to follow Jesus' teaching to 'Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you'?
- Desmond Tutu said: 'To forgive is not just to be altruistic, it is the best form of self-interest.' Consider the idea that offering forgiveness can be regarded as selfish.
- Find out about the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa. Many people believe it is the work of this organisation that has prevented chaos following the transition from apartheid rule.
- There are more stories of forgiveness to be found on 'The Forgiveness Project' (www.theforgivenessproject.com)



Gee Walker tells the story of her son, Anthony, who at 18 was the subject of a racial attack by people he knew. He died of his wounds. His sister, Dominique, also gives her perspective on the events surrounding his death.

Linked Activities

- Does the fact that Dominique and Anthony grew up with the people who committed the murder make any difference to the challenge to offer forgiveness?
- Do we have the right to forgive something that was done to someone else?
- Look out for stories in the media which deal with forgiveness. Display the cuttings.
- Using Gee Walker's example, you could bring a large bag or sack to the classroom and put heavy objects into it, each labelled with a word such as 'revenge', 'hatred', 'bitterness', 'anger' etc. Ask a student to pick it up. What does it feel like to carry it around? How would you like to carry it all day/all week/for the rest of your life? (you could use books wrapped in paper, or better still, bricks or stones, to make the point). How does it feel when you are finally able to put it down?
- We are often encouraged to 'Forgive and forget'. Is this realistic?
- Look out for examples of forgiveness in soap operas, dramas and films.
- What effect does choosing to forgive (or not) have on a person's life?
- Dominique talks about forgiveness being 'an every day thing...' What does she mean?
- Imagine you are writing Gee Walker's story. How would you describe her and her reaction to what happened?



Julie Nicholson's daughter was killed in the terrorist bombings in London in July 2005. As an ordained person, she was expected to show forgiveness but she found it impossible. She felt it was dishonest to ask others to forgive if she couldn't do so herself, and so she relinquished her position as a Parish Priest in Bristol.

Linked Activities

- Make sure that the students understand that Julie was a vicar. She herself says that, "I am a mother before I am a priest." What does she mean by this?
- Is repentance essential for forgiveness to take place? Julie says, 'There is no-one for me to forgive.' She talks about forgiveness meaning 'giving back' and in her particular circumstance it is not possible. Jill Saward, on the other hand, did not feel repentance was necessary. Discuss these different views.
- Contrast the stories of Gee and Julie. Try to understand why they reacted differently.
- Create a drama based on an incident with two different outcomes - in one, forgiveness takes place, in the other it does not.



Andy Clark spent half his life in prison before becoming a Christian. He talks about the powerful effect forgiveness has had on his life. He describes meetings between victims and offenders allowing both to 'work through the process of forgiveness.'

Linked Activities

- Is there anything that is impossible to forgive?
- How far is it true to say that you have to be able to forgive yourself before you can forgive others?
- Make a display of vocabulary associated with forgiveness: love, guilt, repentance, reconciliation, anger, bitterness, revenge, reform, deterrent etc. This could lead to a discussion about the nature and purpose of punishment. Find appropriate images to illustrate each word.
- What is the difference between a crime and a sin?
- If the class watches **all** the clips, you might instigate a discussion comparing the different stories. Which has the greatest impact? Why?
- Go back to the quotations you found. Can the students contribute any of their own? Would they want to add any from the contributors in the clips they have watched? What have they learnt?